

## Love Without Hypocrisy

*Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor. ~Romans 12:9-10*

Imagine becoming a follower of Christ in a country where you cannot freely share your faith, openly discuss the Bible with your family, or meet with others to study the Word of God together. Unfortunately, this is a reality for hundreds of thousands throughout the world today. Believers in these environments are often required to leave their homes and travel great distances in order to receive further teaching and encouragement from the Word of God.

The good news is God has placed several Reach the Rest

teams and ministry partners within such regions. The reason is clear — to assist in the furtherance of the gospel and expand God's Kingdom in these difficult locations. Reach the Rest's Middle East Church Planting Strategist, Josh Earl, shares about his powerful and God-ordained meetings with a group of new believers living under such conditions. These meetings occurred in a neighboring country of a closed Persian country. The purpose was to train and encourage these committed saints.

Josh, and a team of pastors from the United States, who also were former members of the U.S. military, shared and taught on several topics. They started with God's heart and vision to bless the nations and cover the earth with His glory. They also discussed several biblical principles including, abiding in Christ, the Holy Spirit, repentance and belief, baptism, prayer, and the Lord's Supper.

## Prayer Points

- Pray for the Persian believers as they return to their home country to reach and teach others.
- Pray for those in refugee camps and villages who are showing an interest in hearing more about Jesus.
- Pray for a miraculous work of redemption across regions of the Middle East.
- Pray for those who stand in opposition to the gospel and make threats against those who share it in the villages. Pray that their hearts would be softened and that they would come to faith in Jesus Christ.
- Pray that our brothers and sisters will speak of God's gift of salvation in a way that is clear and understandable to those hostile to the gospel.



Remarkably, when the new believers approached the subject of suffering, they welcomed the teaching. They understood that upon their return home,

pastor had the opportunity to baptize those who he had once despised. After the first two believers from Persia were baptized, they, in turn, baptized the two new believers they led to the Lord a few months earlier!

their feet, and joyfully embraced them. Each of the men from these groups left with a changed heart and a renewed sense of commitment to take up their cross, die to themselves, and live for the hope of an eternity with Christ.



would likely result in "suffering for His Name's sake" (Matthew 10:16-25). All of them face the potential of losing their families, their jobs, their homes, and even their lives for simply sharing their faith. Although some were voicing their concerns about rejection and persecution, most were encouraged and excited to go forth in boldness to their own people!

A highlight was when the group celebrated the Lord's Supper together. The team of U.S. pastors also offered to baptize the believers who had not yet had the opportunity to participate in this act of obedience.

There was much rejoicing when one of the U.S. pastors openly shared about how the Lord had changed his heart from hating those in this region to loving them and being concerned for their spiritual condition and eternal destiny. The ultimate blessing came when this very

At the close of the meetings, the team of pastors, some of whom were trained to treat these Middle Eastern men as enemies, prayed over the group, reverently washed

**REACH the REST**  
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